Sonoma Creek Watershed Conservancy: Outreach and Restoration

Sonoma Ecology Center

Assessing steelhead population health in Sonoma Creek.

Award Amount
$270,541

Watershed
Sonoma Creek Watershed

County
Sonoma County

CALFED Region
Bay Region

Legislative Districts
US Congress: 6
State Assembly: 1
State Senate: 2

Purpose

Address needs for community dialogue, conduct assessment of at-risk species, and implement restoration projects in the Sonoma Creek Watershed.

Project Goals

- Conduct public outreach and education regarding watershed issues and expand public participation.
- Provide environmental education for primary classes.
- Conduct an assessment of existing steelhead populations in Sonoma Creek.
- Implement restoration projects on Sonoma Creek tributaries.

Benefits to the CALFED Program

Watershed conditions in Sonoma Creek and the North Bay contribute to the function of the Bay-Delta system because all Central Valley anadromous fish pass through the North Bay and depend on the North Bay and marshes for some critical part of their life cycle. Investing in restoration projects in the North Bay is a highly efficient way to leverage benefits to the entire CALFED Program area. The Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan states that major factors limiting steelhead populations in Sonoma Creek include agricultural and urban development, barriers, and other water quality impacts from urban and agricultural runoff. This project develops better understanding of steelhead populations in the Sonoma Creek Watershed and enhances fish survival by removing barriers and stabilizing streambanks.

Project Overview

The Sonoma Creek Watershed is tributary to San Pablo Bay, arguably the least developed watershed of any size that drains directly to San Francisco Bay. This project's focus is to improve coordination, expand public outreach, assess watershed conditions for steelhead, and implement restoration projects in the Sonoma Creek Watershed. This collaborative project consists of six primary elements:

Provide public outreach and education. The Conservancy provides a forum for agricultural, environmental, scientific, residential, educational, and governmental sectors to discuss watershed issues and seek mutually acceptable solutions to improve management.

Provide environmental education. The project provides environmental and science education classrooms, including lessons and field trips to local assessment and restoration projects. Activities are compatible with California State science education standards.

Conduct an assessment of the steelhead population. This assessment quantifies the locations, age distribution, and year-to-year survival rates of Sonoma Creek's steelhead population and will be used to guide restoration of a self-sustaining steelhead population.

Improve fish passage. Plans are underway to remove a barrier to fish passage on Carriger Creek, a tributary to Sonoma Creek to improve access to several miles of high-quality steelhead habitat.

Stabilize streambanks. The project stabilizes a 1,000-foot stretch of Carriger Creek, a high quality habitat for steelhead.

Restoration planning. This project develops a restoration plan for the Nathanson Creek Preserve and Trailway, an urban greenway in Sonoma that supports steelhead and Chinook salmon.

A local geologist teaches Sonoma Valley students about water quality and stream health.

Contact Information

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